

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Project Location

The Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan Area is located within the City of Carlsbad, California, in northern San Diego County. The Vision Plan Area is an approximately 130-acre, relatively narrow strip of land, approximately 1/8 mile wide and 1-1/2 miles long, located between Carlsbad Boulevard to the west and the San Diego Northern Railroad (SDNR) tracks and right-of-way to the east. Portions of the plan area extend north to Poinsettia Lane and south to La Costa Avenue. Under the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan, the area considered viable for future development (the “Ponto Area”), consists of approximately 50 acres, with its northern limit at Ponto Drive and its southern limit at the Batiquitos Lagoon. Figures 3-1 and 3-2 provide a regional map and a vicinity map, respectively. Figures 3-3 and 3-4 provide an aerial photo of the Ponto Area. The property includes Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 214-160-04, -05, -06, -10, -11, -13, -19, -20, -21, -24, -25, -27, -28, -29, -34, -35, -36; 214-171-11; 214-590-04; 216-010-01, -02, -03, -04, -05; and 216-140-17, -18.

A portion of the Ponto Area lies within the South Carlsbad Coastal Redevelopment Area (SCCRA), which was established in July 2000. To guide redevelopment efforts within this area, the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan was developed over an approximately two-year period from 2003 to 2005. Development of the Vision Plan and the proposed project design occurred with public input from property owners, residents of the City of Carlsbad, and others with interest in the project. Preparers of the Plan also met with representatives from the California Coastal Commission (CCC) and the California State Parks Division to address potential environmental concerns with regards to the project design.

2.2 Project Description Summary

2.2.1 Proposed Land Uses

The following General Plan designations currently apply to the Ponto Beachfront Village area: UA – Unplanned Area; TR/C – Travel/Recreation Commercial; RMH – Residential Medium High (19 dwelling units per acre); RMH/TR – a dual designation indicating that with further planning, one or both uses may be appropriate; and, OS – Open Space and Community Parks. The project would require a General Plan Amendment (GPA) to designate the Ponto Area as an area of “Special Planning Consideration” that would require properties within the Ponto Area to be developed under the guidance of the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan.

At present, there are three City zoning designations that apply to the various parcels within the Ponto Area. These designations include: PC – Planned Community; CT-Q – Commercial Tourist zone with Qualified Development Overlay; and, RD-M-Q – Residential Density – Multiple zone with Qualified Development Overlay. Several parcels have a dual designation, CT-Q/RD-M-Q, indicating that with further planning, one or both uses may be appropriate. No changes to the existing zoning are proposed with the Vision Plan.

Overall, the Vision Plan’s land use mix would combine tourist-serving, commercial and residential uses. Tourist-serving hotel and time-share units are envisioned to provide the services that tourists need and appreciate, such as restaurants, gift shopping, and various

other commercial uses. The Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan proposes a combination of six Character Areas that will provide a mix of land uses and promote an economically viable tourist-oriented area that provides residential opportunities and shopping and services for both residents and visitors. The following describes the specific land uses that are envisioned, encouraged, and allowed by right or by conditional use permit in each of the six Ponto Beachfront Village Land Use Character Areas.

Live-Work Neighborhood. The Live-Work Neighborhood is intended to give flexibility to land owners that want to remain living on their properties while expanding uses to include business opportunities. A live-work unit is a home that functions both as a place to live and a place to work. These types of residences typically do not generate much walk-in business off the street and have very few, if any, employees.

Townhouse Neighborhood. The Townhouse Neighborhood is intended for multi-family homes in condominium ownership with a minimum density of 15 dwelling units per acre and a maximum density of 23 dwelling units per acre, with a Growth Management control point of 19 dwelling units per acre.

Mixed-Use Center. The Mixed Use Center is intended to be the core of the Ponto Beachfront Village and will contain both commercial and multi-family residential uses. To maximize economic viability for businesses in the Mixed Use Center, both visitor-serving and neighborhood-serving uses and services are intended. The area would be central to residents of the Townhome Neighborhood, Live/Work and Mixed Use developments, visitors staying at the three hotels and the surrounding off-site residential neighborhoods.

Beachfront Resort. The Resort Hotel, located south of Avenida Encinas and overlooking Batiquitos Lagoon, is intended to be a top-quality, upscale visitor destination resort with meeting facilities, restaurants and a small amount of visitor-serving retail for guest convenience and accessible to the general public.

Garden Hotel. The Garden Hotel, located at the corner of Ponto Drive and Carlsbad Boulevard, is intended to be a moderate-priced, full-service visitor hotel with a conference center, meeting facilities and a restaurant.

Village Hotel. The Village Hotel, located north of Beach Way, is intended to be a visitor facility with both hotel rooms and timeshare units. The hotel will not have extensive food and beverage facilities. Visitors may easily walk to the visitor-oriented businesses in the Mixed Use Center to shop or to eat in the restaurants.

2.2.2 Community Amenities

A number of community amenities are proposed with the project. These amenities are discussed in greater detail in Section 3.0. Community amenities include trails east and west of Carlsbad Boulevard, a multi-purpose trail, and connection to the regional trail system. A Wetland Interpretive Park is proposed, along with a community facility-nature/arts center. Other facilities would include a linear park, putting course, and public plazas and courtyards. A linear park would be created along the west side of Carlsbad Boulevard with the proposed realignment of the roadway.

2.2.3 Infrastructure

Infrastructure would be provided consistent with the City's Local Facilities Management Program (LFMP), Zones 9 and 22, which affect the Ponto Area. Proposed improvements would require realignment of an onsite 84-inch storm drain, realignment of a sewer force main and high-pressure gas fuel line, and improvements for water service.

2.2.4 Project Access and Roadway Improvements

Project access would be provided from Carlsbad Boulevard by Avenida Encinas, Ponto Road, and (future) Beach Way. The Vision Plan envisions the realignment of Carlsbad Boulevard to the east to allow for creation of a linear park along the west side of the roadway, and for landscaping treatments to enhance the appearance of the roadway. Ponto Drive onsite would be improved and extended north through the Ponto Area as a two-lane roadway with a planted median, bike lane, parkways, and ample sidewalks. The addition of Beach Way would connect the east and west segments of Ponto Drive. The improved Ponto Drive would be accessed from Carlsbad Boulevard, Avenida Encinas, and the proposed Beach Way. Avenida Encinas would provide access to the Ponto Beachfront Village via Ponto Drive. As part of the realignment of Carlsbad Boulevard, a new left turn lane would be added to the northbound lanes at Avenida Encinas to allow beachgoers access to the southern portion of Carlsbad State Beach.

2.3 Environmental Impacts

Implementation of the Ponto Vision Plan may result in a significant effect on the environment. As a result, preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines. Issue areas examined in this Program EIR include: air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, traffic and circulation, visual aesthetics and grading, agricultural resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, land use, and public utilities and services.

The Executive Summary Table, given at the end of this section, identifies the significant impacts that would result from the project and gives mitigation measures to reduce such impacts to less than significant where possible. Additional site-specific analyses may be required with future development of individual lands within the Ponto Area to determine significant impacts. The following summarizes the impact areas as identified through the EIR process:

Category I – Significant, Unavoidable Impacts

Based on the analysis conducted for preparation of the EIR, the following impacts have been identified as significant and unavoidable:

- Air Quality (Long-term Operational Emissions and Short-term Construction Emissions)
- Noise (Short-Term Construction)

Category II – Impacts Mitigated to Less than Significant

Implementation of the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan would result in significant impacts. Significant impacts have been evaluated through the EIR process and are identified as follows:

- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Noise
- Traffic and Circulation

Implementation of proposed mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts to these resource areas to less than significant.

Category III – Less than Significant Impacts

Impacts were determined to be less than significant through EIR analysis for the following issue areas:

- Visual Aesthetics and Grading
- Agricultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Public Utilities and Service Systems

Impacts were determined to be less than significant in the Initial Study for the following issue areas:

- Population and Housing
- Recreation
- Energy and Mineral Resources

2.4 Potential Areas of Controversy

As required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15123 (b)(2), potential areas of controversy are fully analyzed in Chapter 5.0, Significant Environmental Effects. The potential for significant impacts relative to Air Quality (Section 5.1); Biological Resources (Section 5.2); Cultural Resources (Section 5.3); Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Section 5.4); Noise (Section 5.5); and, Traffic and Circulation (Section 5.6) are analyzed within this EIR. As applicable, significant impacts are identified and mitigation measures are given. Comments received in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR are included in Appendix A of this EIR.

2.5 Issues To Be Resolved by the Decision-Making Body

Issues to be resolved by the decisionmakers include the choice among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate the significant effects (CEQA Guidelines, §15123 (b)(3)). The ultimate development of the Ponto Area would result in potentially significant but mitigable impacts to traffic and circulation, biological resources, noise, hazards and hazardous materials, and cultural resources. With implementation of proposed mitigation measures, impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level, with the exception of air quality impacts (short-term construction and long-term operational emissions) and noise impacts (short-term construction). No other significant and mitigated or unmitigated impacts have been identified for the proposed project. Impacts to jurisdictional waters and coastal sage scrub from the project as proposed would require additional review and permit authorizations from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board. This analysis includes four potential alternative alignments for Carlsbad Boulevard. The decision makers should select which alignment is most appropriate for a more detailed analysis.

2.6 Alternatives to the Proposed Project

Six alternatives to the proposed project are identified and analyzed in detail in Section 6.0 of this EIR: the No Development Alternative, the No Project Alternative, Increased Residential Use Alternative, Increased Residential Use/Open Space Alternative, Increased Townhomes/Single-Family Detached Alternative, and the Increased Townhomes/Visitor Use Alternative. These alternatives were chosen with a focus on reducing or eliminating significant environmental impacts of the proposed project.

2.6.1 No Development Alternative

The No Development Alternative assumes that the Ponto Area would not be developed with the proposed project. The project site would remain in its present condition and would continue to support the existing single-family residential and small-scale commercial and light-industrial uses. No onsite or offsite roadway improvements, including Carlsbad Boulevard, would occur with this alternative. Refer to Section 6.2 for a detailed discussion of this alternative.

2.6.2 No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, the Ponto Area would be developed as allowed under the current land use and zoning designations without special permitting. As the proposed project does not propose a change to the underlying zoning, and would allow uses similar to that allowed under the existing General Plan designation, uses developed under the No Project Alternative would be similar to that proposed with the Vision Plan; however, the Vision Plan envisions uses that would actually result in a decreased intensity than that allowed under the existing land use designations. The No Project Alternative would allow the property to be developed with travel/recreational commercial, medium-high residential uses, or as open space or parks.

In the southern portion of the site, the existing General Plan designation would allow for travel and recreational commercial uses, such as hotels, restaurants, and commercial retail, to enhance the tourism and recreational opportunities in the City. In the northern portion of the

site, residential housing could be provided at a density of 8-15 dwelling units per acre, or in combination with travel and recreational commercial uses. Areas that are currently designated as unplanned may require further planning to determine appropriate uses.

Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would ultimately contribute to offsite road improvements as applicable, to mitigate for future potential traffic impacts caused by vehicular trips generated by onsite uses. This alternative would also propose onsite trails and linkage to the regional trail system for recreational use. In addition, improvements would be made, consistent with the Zone 9 and 22 LFMPs, to provide public water and sewer service to the site. Development onsite would be consistent with the Scenic Corridor Guidelines and would contribute to improvements along Carlsbad Boulevard, but would not result in an overall themed design approach that would establish and enhance a major entryway into the City of Carlsbad. Refer to Section 6.3 for a detailed discussion of this alternative

2.6.3 Increased Residential Use Alternative

The Increased Residential Land Use Alternative assumes that the majority of the Ponto Area would be developed with townhomes, at a density of 19 du/acre; refer to Figure 6-2. At this density, an estimated 352 townhomes could be constructed. In addition, the Resort Hotel and Hotel/Commercial uses would also be developed, similar to the proposed project. No Mixed-Use or Live-Work/Mixed-Use uses would be developed, thereby minimizing commercial retail or tourism-oriented uses. This alternative would not result in improvements associated with the State Beach, nor include enhancements to the major entryway into the City at Carlsbad Boulevard and Batiquitos Lagoon. Refer to Section 6.4 for additional discussion of this alternative.

2.6.4 Increased Residential Use / Open Space Alternative

The Increased Residential Use / Open Space Alternative would result in a large portion of the property being developed with townhomes at a density of 19 du/acre; refer to Figure 6-3. This would allow approximately 316 dwelling units. In addition, a Mixed-Use Center would be developed in the same location as with the proposed project, and would allow for a variety of commercial retail uses, restaurants, and specialty stores to support the residential and hotel and residential uses. The Hotel/Commercial use would be proposed in the northern portion of the property, although at a smaller scale than compared to that of the proposed project. In addition, this alternative proposes an open space/community park in the southern portion of the property, rather than the Beachfront Resort. The park would be open to the public and would offer opportunities for active and passive recreation, such as walking trails and picnic tables. Refer to Section 6.5 for a detailed discussion of this alternative.

2.6.5 Increased Townhomes / Single-Family Detached Alternative

The Townhomes / Single-Family Detached Alternative assumes that the Ponto Area would be largely developed with townhomes and single-family development at a density of 10 du/acre; refer to Figure 6-4. This would allow for approximately 172 dwelling units within the northern portion of the site. In addition, the Hotel/Commercial uses at the northern end of the property would be developed. A Mixed-Use Center would be developed in the central portion of the site, just north of Avenida Encinas, similar to the proposed project, but at a smaller scale. The Resort Hotel Use would be developed in the southern portion of the site,

also similar to the proposed project. This alternative assumes the realignment of Carlsbad Boulevard with development of a linear park along the west side of the roadway. Onsite road patterns would be the same as the proposed project. No improvements to enhance the State Beach would be proposed with this alternative. Refer to Section 6.6 for a detailed discussion of this alternative.

2.6.6 Increased Townhomes / Visitor Use Alternative

The Increased Townhomes / Visitor Use Alternative assumes that the Ponto Area would be largely developed with a mixture of uses, similar to the proposed project, but with additional residential dwelling units provided; refer to Figure 6-5. In the southern portion of the site, the Resort Hotel use would be developed, similar to the proposed project. An increased number of townhomes would be developed at a density of 19 du/acre as compared to the proposed project, with such uses replacing the Mixed-Use Center. Approximately 281 dwelling units could be developed under this alternative. This alternative would allow for a mixture of commercial uses including retail shops and restaurants. In addition, the Hotel/Commercial use at the northern portion of the site would be developed at a reduced scale, with construction of a neighborhood park at the northernmost portion of the site to provide recreational opportunities and to buffer the hotel use from the adjacent residential neighborhoods. This alternative assumes the realignment of Carlsbad Boulevard with development of a linear park along the west side of the roadway. Onsite road patterns would be the same as the proposed project. No improvements to enhance the State Beach would be proposed with this alternative. Refer to Section 6.7 for a detailed discussion of this alternative.

2.6.7 Carlsbad Boulevard Realignment Alternatives

The Vision Plan includes four alternatives for the realignment of Carlsbad Boulevard; refer to Figures 6-1A and 6-1B. The alignments were evaluated within the Vision Plan for potential effects relative to significant impacts on biological resources, visual resources, parking, traffic signal operations and bridge requirements; refer to Table 6-2. The Vision Plan analyzed the re-alignment alternatives to identify the potential benefits of moving Carlsbad Boulevard lanes to either the west or to the east of their current location. The re-alignment of Carlsbad Boulevard represents the opportunity to achieve several goals of the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan and the South Carlsbad Coastal Redevelopment Area Redevelopment Plan.

Alternative #1 is considered the Environmentally Superior Alternative with respect for the alternatives considered for the re-alignment of Carlsbad Boulevard. Alternative #1 envisions shifting the southbound lanes of Carlsbad Boulevard between existing Ponto Road and Avenida Encinas to the east, thereby providing additional space on the west side of the roadway for both on-street parking and an enhanced multi-purpose trail. In relocating the roadway, Alternative #1 would create approximately 0.8 acre along the west side of Carlsbad Boulevard, which could be utilized as a linear public park.

Alternative #2 is the alignment of Carlsbad Boulevard analyzed as part of the project in the EIR with respect for potential environmental impacts; refer to Figure 3-5, which reflects the same alignment as Alternative #2. Similar to Alternative #1, Alternative #2 envisions shifting the southbound lanes of Carlsbad Boulevard between existing Ponto Road and Avenida

Encinas to the east, thereby providing additional space on the west side of the road for on-street parking and an enhanced multi-purpose trail. This alternative would create approximately 2.0 acres on the west side of Carlsbad Boulevard north of Avenida Encinas and 1.8 acres on the west side of Carlsbad Boulevard, south of Avenida Encinas. This available land could then be used for a linear public park or for expansion of the South Carlsbad State Beach Campground.

Alternative #3 would be similar to Alternative #1 in that it would relocate the southbound lanes of Carlsbad Boulevard to the east, freeing approximately 0.8 acre on the west side of Carlsbad Boulevard for a linear public park. In addition, realignment of the northbound lanes to the west would create approximately 1.2 acres along the east side of Carlsbad Boulevard (north of Avenida Encinas) and 2.2 acres on the east side of Carlsbad Boulevard, south of Avenida Encinas. This acreage would be available for additional development or community amenities.

Alternative #4 With Alternative #4, the northbound and southbound lanes of Carlsbad Boulevard between (proposed) Beach Way and Ponto Road would be re-aligned to the east; refer to Figure 6-1B. The existing lane configuration would not be changed with the roadway re-alignment (no additional lanes would be proposed). The re-alignment of Carlsbad Boulevard with Alternative #4 would be designed to connect with the roadway as recently improved with the Hanover Beach Colony development to the north.

To the south of Beach Way, Alternative #4 would re-align Carlsbad Boulevard to the east, consistent with the re-alignment proposed with Carlsbad Boulevard Re-alignment Alternative #1 (see description above). This alternative would allow for the creation of approximately 0.5 acre on the west side of Carlsbad Boulevard for a linear public park, in addition to the 0.8 acre created with Alternative #1.